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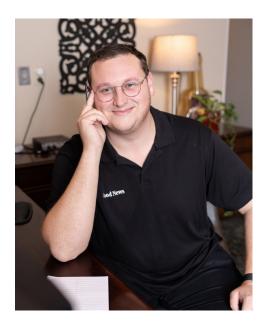
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

### Classroom Legacies A legacy never dies.

A STUDENT IN our community today will walk the halls of Congress with a pinned American flag on their chest. A student in our community today will pray their knees still hold when their nerves get the best of them as they walk the steps to the stage to accept a Grammy. A student in our community today will one day have sweaty palms as they fly across the world to defend our country. Every kindergarten classroom in our community is full of future firefighters, future parents, future doctors, and future happy humans who didn't want a job to define them. A future president may be walking our halls today.

The kids who laugh on the playground today will one day face hard choices where both paths hurt. They may have a moment where they question themselves, but they'll make the right choice in the end. They'll remember their role model. They'll think, "What would Mr. Jean do?" and remember who they are. They'll race across the field during the Su-

Wesley Bryant EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

per Bowl, remembering their history teacher — their coach — as they score the winning touchdown. They'll raise kids of their own, repeating the mantras they heard in the 10th grade. Childhood memories will play in their minds when they take the table's order, and their favorite teacher sits with a smile.

Our educators create legacies that carry on for the rest of time. Not because they make good money that way — just because that's who they are. They wake up early, work long days with less pay than they deserve, and come home to take care of their other responsibilities. They bring extra school supplies for the kids who had to do without. They teach our children how to do math and how to read, yes ... but they also teach our kids how to look inward. They teach our kids how to fight for a better world. But most importantly, they teach our kids how to love.

Teachers, we thank you for the legacies you create and the legacies that you are. This issue of Good News is for you. **GN** 

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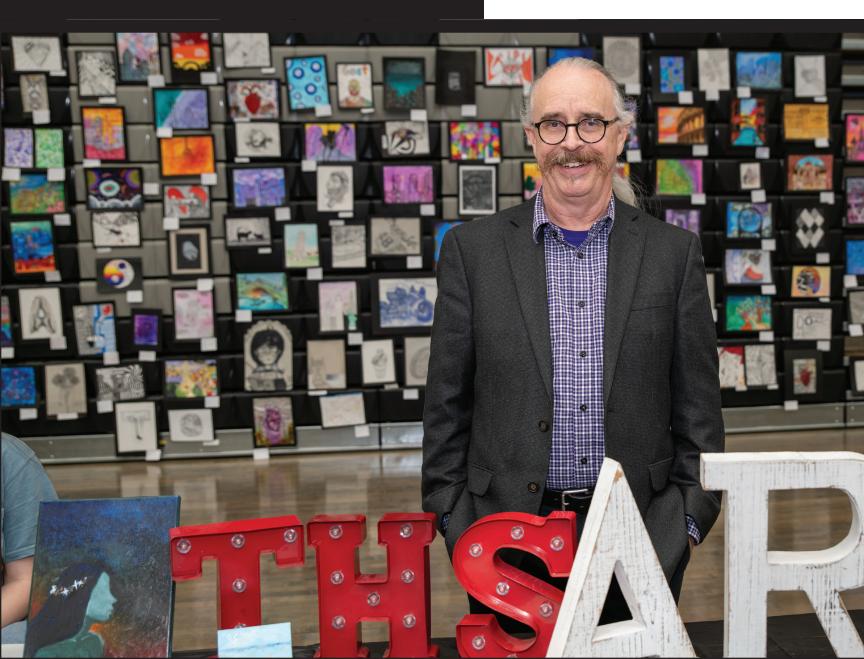
### Atticus Hensley

## BUILDING AN ARTISTIC LEGACY

Fine arts programs can transform students and entire communities.

By Jeriah Brumfield Photography by Ashleigh Newnes T HE FIRST thing you notice when stepping into Tullahoma middle and high schools is the creativity — a nice blend of colors, movement, and melody coming from every corner. The gymnasium boasts student artwork, from bold, abstract brushstrokes to careful sketches of still lifes. Each one is a window into the minds of young artists. There's a joy and an overlapping compilation of creativity that seems to say, "We're learning. We're trying. We're making something beautiful."

A group of theater students rehearse for the spring musical in the gymnasium. Their voices resound as they belt out harmonies. Accidental ad-libs and bursts of laughter punctuate the earnest strains of their performance.



Then, there's the band room. Inside, the drum major stands at the conductor's podium. With a flick of their wrist, the music resumes — tentative at first, then swelling into something full and rich.

This is the world Atticus Hensley has helped build: where community members share in the beauty of the arts that keeps this small town thriving. For nearly 30 years, Hensley has been an educator, mentor, motivator, and guide for many students in the community's beloved band program. Growing up in East Tennessee, Hensley tried Scouts and sports, but nothing felt right. It wasn't until he saw his father playing guitar that he found his passion.



After learning to play, Hensley joined David Crockett High School's band in Jonesboro, Tennessee, where he discovered music could be more than just a hobby.

"The students were amazing musicians but also an amazing family. You could feel the heart in everything they did."

"I thought, 'I finally found my place. This is what I want."

After discovering his love for music in the high school band, Hensley knew he wanted music to be a lifelong pursuit. This guided him to begin his teaching career in Tullahoma in 1995 as a private instructor.

He later taught beginning band and, in 2010, became a full-time seventh and eighth grade band director. His career eventually led him to become the district's fine arts coordinator, where he introduced five new fine arts teachers — four elementary teachers in 2018 and a high school teacher in 2024.

This was a big step for the fine arts department. They knew the lessons of unity and creativity and that the academic growth that followed would stick with students well after they left high school. And for Hensley, that's what made the arts so powerful.

One story that he believes expresses that power involves a sixth grade boy who joined the band program a few years ago. The boy had been struggling in school, barely passing his classes and frequently getting into trouble. Hensley believed the band was an outlet and confidence boost for the student.

"School was not his happy place, except when he was in the band room."

Challenges have always been part of the job, but for Hensley, they've also been opportunities to rethink what education can be.

 Though retired from teaching, Atticus continues to advocate for the arts, ensuring the next generation of students has the same opportunities.



 With patience and precision, Shirley Meneses brings her vision to life in "Otterly Happy," a work that captures both skill and joy.

"Education tends to focus on products. This class teaches you math; this class teaches you how to write," he explained. "We need to encourage creative, independent thinkers who can approach problems with curiosity and confidence."

He pointed to an elementary art class-room as an example.

"In an elementary art class, kids splash paint and make messes, but that's the point. They're learning to be independent thinkers. In a band, each child decodes the music, thinking about their role in the ensemble and the notes they play. That creative process is what sets them apart."

Hensley made the bittersweet decision to retire in 2023. However, he is never far from the arts. He now serves as the Tennessee Department of Education's fine arts manager.

Like many people, Hensley believes the arts are not about teaching students what to think but how to think. And the results speak for themselves.

Colorful murals in the hallways, joyful harmonies pouring out of the gymnasium, and rich, resonant melodies from the band room are proof of a thriving program. But more importantly, they're proof of thriving students learning to take risks, collaborate, and become impactful community members. **GN** 



Anthony and Jessica Earhart:

## Faith fuels **RECOVERY**

Rooted in Christ Recovery helps others find freedom, faith, and a fresh start through community.

By Jeriah Brumfield // Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

HERE'S A certain kind of light that shines on people who have walked through darkness and come out the other side. You can see it in Anthony and Jessica Earhart, the husband-and-wife duo behind Rooted in Christ Recovery. This light glows with redemption, healing, wisdom, and faith. Their transition from addiction to ministry is inspiring — but it's also proof of what grace and grit can do.

Anthony battled addiction for 30 years, struggling with substance abuse and fighting an enemy that seemed impossible to defeat. He described his former self as "a broken shell of a man, almost dead with a needle in his arm, hungry and afraid."

But on April 13, 2025, he celebrates four years of sobriety, which he credits to God's mercy. That victory planted the seed for what would become Rooted in Christ Recovery — an outreach ministry that helps others break free from addiction and find a more fulfilling life.

Jessica, however, has a story of her own.

"I did try substances for a while," she said. "But depression is really where my addiction came from, and if it wasn't for God's love, I wouldn't be here today either."

They began their ministry with a virtual support network on Facebook, which quickly grew to more than 70,000 followers. After sharing his testimony at a church in Decherd, Anthony realized how important it was for people to tell their personal stories.

"One guy came to Christ right after the testimony," he said.

With support from their former church, Anthony and Jessica started Table Talk, a weekly support group for open discussions about addiction and recovery. As the group grew, they felt called to establish their own place of worship.

In July 2024, they began holding services in a friend's workshop, starting with 18 members. Their congregation has since grown to over 90 people, gathering for Wednesday Bible studies, Friday Table Talks, and Sunday services.

Rooted in Christ Recovery also addresses the broader needs of the community. The food ministry serves more than 100 families each week. Partnering with Westside Nazarene Church, they distribute food to those who may not have access due to transportation or financial limitations.

"We fill their cars full of physical food, but we give them spiritual food, too," Anthony said. "We love on, pray for, and build relationships with everyone that comes through our food ministry." Their ministry even reaches those outside of Tullahoma. Partnering with seven other ministries, they joined Jennifer Moore with Soul Savages, who launched Disciple the Street, a program that brings aid to unhoused individuals in different cities, including Chattanooga, Nashville, and locations in Georgia.

"In October 2024, we went to Nashville. We fed more than 400 homeless people," Anthony said. "That day, we got vans ready to take whoever was willing off the streets and into recovery homes. Eight people said yes."

But their mission doesn't stop at meeting immediate needs. Anthony and Jessica are focused on longterm restoration.

Bryan Mosley, a Rooted in Christ Recovery pastor, and Anthony own Rooted in Christ Construction, a business that employs and trains people transitioning from addiction to self-sufficiency. They want to make sure individuals leaving recovery have the tools to rebuild their lives. The men in their recovery program work alongside them, learning carpentry, drywall, flooring, and other practical skills they can use to secure stable employment — or even start their own businesses.

The team also oversees a recovery home, Casting Net Ministry, owned by Chris Lewullis, where five men reside. Each morning begins with Proverbs and fellowship before heading off to work.

The same light that shines on Anthony and Jessica now spreads to those they serve. Together, they are proving that no one is ever too far gone — and with faith, community, and a whole lot of love, redemption is always within reach. **GN** 

### For more information, visit Rooted in Christ Recovery on Facebook.



▲ Even the smallest hands can make a difference — Waylon carries a crate of food onto the trailer.

## EMPOWERING STUDENTS SOCIALLY, EMOTIONALLY & ACADEMICALLY

A compassionate school counselor helps kids grow into kind, confident, and caring leaders.

By Jeriah Brumfield // Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

NDREA PARSON leaned in at a corner lunch table in Robert E. Lee Elementary's cafeteria. Her genuine smile set the tone as students opened up about their day. Between bites of lunch, she helped them untangle conflicts, celebrate small victories, and build friendships. Parson's gift for connecting with kids makes her a familiar face in the school, and her presence is reassuring for students and staff alike.

The story of how Parson became the school's beloved counselor began earlier, beginning with her growing love for children and education.

One of the things that drew Parson into education was the influence of her fifth grade science teacher, who made learning both exciting and meaningful. His love for science showed her that true joy in teaching — and a little bit of heart — can really make a difference.

Before Parson became a counselor, she spent 12 years as a classroom teacher, which gave her a front-row seat to her students' lives. According to Parson, while in the classroom, she learned about her students' unique personalities and struggles. As a school counselor, these insights, compiled with her degree in school counseling and guidance, now help her advocate for students on a deeper level. The calming space in the library provides students with a quiet place to regroup and recharge. As a counselor, Andrea Parson helps children develop strategies to navigate big emotions and build resilience.

"I am the student's advocate. Whenever they have a need — whether social, friend emotional, academic, or even physical, for things they need for school or at home —I am the go-to person to help." learn

Parson also works closely with students whose home lives are a little more complex. She brings a much-needed perspective to her counseling, especially as a mother of a son with autism.

"That gives me a different perspective as a parent when it comes to helping meet those academic or even social needs," she explained. "Sometimes, those meetings can be difficult for a parent. I know they were for me initially, so having that perspective helps me, too."

One of Parson's favorite parts of her job is working with students on projects that help them grow emotionally. For instance, throughout the school year, she organizes lunch groups and encourages friendships. Each February, she leads a school-wide kindness project celebrating Kindness Month, where students learn the value of simple acts of kindness. This year's Kindness Project saw them helping 5 Loaves 4 Kids, a local nonprofit here in Tullahoma.

Parson is also involved with the Tullahoma Area Chamber of Commerce's Creating Educational Opportunities program. This initiative bridges the school and the local community, where students can connect with local businesses and learn the value of giving back.

This program empowers children and helps them find their place in the community. Parson explained that the students' artwork displayed in places like the hospital or Chick-fil-A shows them that their contributions matter.



"Kids are so proud when somebody brags about their work. It just feels nice to have somebody believe in you."

Every month, Traders Bank hosts an event at the school where students can deposit money and learn about the banking process. The bank also holds a coloring contest, with the winner receiving real money added to their account, giving students hands-on experience with financial literacy.

Robert E. Lee Elementary also collaborates with Morning Pointe Senior Living every fall for an annual food drive.

"This past year, we collected around 2,400 items for the canned food drive in November. Our goal was 2,000," she said.

"We want it to be a true partnership, where we help and make each other better."

Parson has a gift for helping kids succeed in their studies and develop into kind, thoughtful people. Through her words and actions, she wants them to know that she values them and will continue to support them.

"All of our kids have opportunities to achieve the goals they want to set for themselves, and we want to help them reach them." GN



▲ Andrea Parson leans in at a corner lunch table in Robert E. Lee Elementary's cafeteria, her genuine smile setting the tone as students open up about their day. Between bites of lunch, she helps them untangle conflicts, celebrate small victories, and build friendships. (Emma Chambers, Ryder Albert)



▲ Andrea Parson

### Sundrop Shoppe & Luncheonette:

## Víntage Flavors, Cheríshed Memoríes

A retro-inspired gem offers delicious eats and warm hospitality.

T HE SUNDROP Shoppe & Luncheonette offers a delightful fusion of nostalgic ambiance and delectable cuisine. With its retro "soda shop" vibes and tasty menu, it has understandably become a cherished spot for both locals and visitors seeking a unique dining experience.

The Sundrop Shoppe's interior transports guests back in time, reminiscent of an early 20th-century drugstore soda fountain. The decor features vintage memorabilia and large windows, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere that evokes a sense of nostalgia.

The menu offers a variety of family recipes and sweet treats that cater to everyone. For breakfast enthusiasts, options like French toast and pancakes have garnered acclaim and are served all day! Lunch offerings include soups, sandwiches, and salads, with their 1/2 sandwich and soup combination offering an affordable meal with endless combination pairings. I happily tried a few!

The French onion soup is rich and flavorful, topped with a layer of warm, gooey cheese. The always-classic cheesy potato soup is a hug in a bowl. And "Maggie's Cream of Tomato Soup" is a comforting classic.

Sandwich lovers can indulge in creations like the grilled cheese made with three kinds of cheese, which pairs beautifully with tomato soup. Or try "Aunt ME's Chicken Salad," loaded with



crunchy veggies, fruits, and pecans. You can opt for "Robert's Classic Club Sandwich," piled with meat and cheese, offering a rich and satisfying experience — so many delicious choices!

There are so many options that "Paige's Award-Winning White Chicken Chili" and "Grandaddy's Pimento Cheese" cold sandwich are already on my radar for a future visit because I could only try so many options in one sitting!

Patrons can also enjoy classic soda fountain offerings such as shakes, malts, and sundaes, further enhancing the nostalgic experience. We enjoyed the Cherry Sun Drop and root beer floats and left with full bellies and wide smiles.

Operating hours are from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. The combination of a comfortable setting, vintage vibes, diverse menu, and warm hospitality makes the Sundrop Shoppe & Luncheonette a standout destination in Tullahoma, offering a memorable dining experience that pays homage to classic American traditions. **GN** 



#### GOOD NEWS IS COMING TO DINNER!

We will feature a local food critic's thoughts as they dine in Tullahoma. This month Tabitha Buckner visited Sundrop Shoppe and Luncheonette.

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## Full Circle Service

A former officer-turned-educator empowers students with integrity, leadership, and real-world wisdom.

By Jeriah Brumfield Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

**ONICA BLAKE-BEASLEY'S** story could be the script for the ultimate comeback — brimming with tough decisions, unexpected turns, and growth that didn't come easy. As a former police officer and now a local educator in Tullahoma, Blake-Beasley has walked through fire and come out stronger than ever. Every battle she's faced is a lesson she now passes down, and adversity is a blueprint for empowerment.

Teaching, it seems, was always in her destiny.

Before his death, her father confided in community members, telling them she would pursue a teaching career.

"When I came back home, I had so many people tell me that for years, my dad had told them I was moving back to Tullahoma, and I was going to work for the school system," she said.

He saw something in her well before she ever walked into a classroom, and today, she honors that vision by equipping her students with real-world experience, opening doors to careers in criminal justice, and showing them what it truly means to serve.

Blake-Beasley creates an immersive, hands-on training ground where students gain real-world experience in criminal justice. They engage in mock trials, forensic analysis, and investigative techniques that build critical thinking and practical skills. They visit local police stations, and occasionally, professionals come in to speak about their work. Blake-Beasley believes these experiences are crucial for showing her students how vast the field is and how many ways they can serve and empower their community.

Blake-Beasley also equips her students with critical self-protection skills.

Before she ever taught a class, Blake-Beasley served on the front lines of justice. Inspired by her veteran father, she pursued a degree at Lipscomb University and answered the call to serve in law enforcement. She thrived in the field and stood up for those who had no one else to lean on.

However, her time on the force ended in a heartbreaking and violent incident. While off duty, she was attacked and suddenly found herself on the other side of the system she had spent her career upholding.

Even when the odds were stacked against her, she stood her ground and took legal measures, resulting in a settlement.

After leaving law enforcement in 2019, she found herself at a crossroads. Then, a teaching position in criminal justice opened at Tullahoma High School, and it felt like fate. When her father died in 2020, the pull to come home grew even stronger. Her mother, battling illness, needed her, and Blake-Beasley knew it was time to give back to the community that raised her.

Her first day working for Tullahoma City Schools as an educator was on what would have been her father's 64th birthday, which felt like confirmation and a tribute to the man who always believed she would end up there.

Her patience, compassion, and ability to guide people through their hardest moments — skills she developed on the force now make her an extraordinary teacher.

Instead of protecting and serving through law enforcement, she now does so through education.

She believes teaching criminal justice requires showing students what it means to seek justice and to do the right thing even when it's hard.

"What matters to me most is that the students are better humans when they leave my classroom than they were when they entered," she said.

She challenges them to think critically, act with integrity, and use their voices for good.

Blake-Beasley understands the power of her presence. As one of the few African American educators at her school, she's a role model who breaks down stereotypes and opens students' eyes to different perspectives. What matters to me most is that the students are better humans when they leave my classroom than they were when they entered.

- MONICA BLAKE-BEASLEY

Blake-Beasley grew up in a family devoted to public service, built a career in law enforcement, and now shares her knowledge as an educator. Her life has come full circle, and each day in the classroom, she honors a legacy that shows the true measure of strength is based on those we serve. **GN** 



 Students Anna Milhahn and James Jarvis engage in hands-on learning, practicing proper arrest techniques under Monica Blake-Beasley's guidance.





# Bringing History to Life

She blends storytelling and creativity to make the past engaging and unforgettable for her students.

By Jeriah Brumfield Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

**NA** liberal arts classroom at Tullahoma High School, Amy Sisk stands at the front, animatedly telling stories of monarchs, revolutions, and lessons from history. She recites facts while bringing the past to life, layering it with drama, heart, and humor. After 20 years of teaching, Sisk has learned that history is bigger than dates and timelines. It's a collection of messy, beautiful stories, much like life itself.

Every day in Sisk's classroom, students experience both routine and spontaneity. Mornings start with independent work, leading to enthralling lectures with games and videos. She adapts traditional teaching methods with creative techniques to keep students engaged.

One of her favorite tricks is turning timelines into singsong hand gestures, helping her students memorize 120 years of history without even realizing it.

"Almost 15 years ago, someone told us to do hand gestures with a song or tell kids a story that doesn't sound like history, then surprise them with how it is history," she said. "I like trying to do that." That constant evolution keeps Sisk energized, even after two decades.

For Sisk, teaching means balancing two great loves: her students and the stories of history.

"I absolutely love the content that I teach," Sisk said with a smile. "I love being able to tell the stories of history. The best part is when kids are really excited about it and love history stories, too."

Many students grow up believing that history is a dry recounting of past events, but anyone who's lucky enough to take Sisk's class realizes that history often reflects the present. Their discussions often start with headlines — topics like global conflicts or family dynamics — and naturally tie back to lessons in the curriculum.

"There's almost always something in the news that kids have heard about — Ukraine, weapons, or something else. When we're talking about monarchies, for example, we get around to these monarchs who didn't learn their lessons, made mistakes, and suffered because of it," she said.

Her energy lights up the room as she effortlessly balances teaching facts and life lessons along the way.

"I want them to understand that life is complicated, just like history. There's no easy fix for anything. Mistakes happen, but you can always bounce back," Sisk explained. "Whether it's a tough assignment or a bad attitude, you reset, you try again. Everything is fixable."

Every day, she teaches her students the importance of perseverance and kindness and intertwines those values into everything they do.

She tells them that even a simple "thank you" can take them far. It could open doors of opportunity, help them build relationships, and create waves of kindness in the world.

Sisk's cheerful spirit and optimism make her classroom feel safe. Students leave her class feeling encouraged to be curious, fail, and learn from it all.

Sisk traces her love for teaching back to her own school days. She fondly remembers her high school teacher, Ms. Alsup, who made history come alive through storytelling.

"She was wonderful. In college, I had professors who didn't use projectors or pictures. They just told stories, and I could wrap my head around them. I loved listening to the stories."

That love for stories propelled Sisk toward a career in history and education, and she's been telling stories ever since. I love being able to tell the stories of history. The best part is when kids are really excited about it and love history stories, too.

- AMY SISK

Like history itself, her lessons are full of humanity, grace, and second chances. A great teacher can influence far more than a student's education, and even after her students have moved on to the next grade level, they carry her lessons with them. **GN** 



History class isn't just about memorizing dates — it's about storytelling, discussion, and sometimes, a good laugh. Amy Sisk keeps her students engaged with humor and energy, making the past feel a little more alive.

# AMY SISK



## The Classroom in the Sky

From your first lesson to solo flight, Wright Base creates a comfortable, low-pressure space for all students.

By Jeriah Brumfield Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

LYING FOR the first time is an experience like no other. Reluctant but optimistic, you step into a Cessna 172, a sleek, unassuming aircraft that promises freedom. Chief Flight Instructor Myron Yoder, calm and experienced, sits beside you, his voice steady and affirming. As the engine starts and the propeller spins, a rush of nervousness fills you.

Then comes takeoff. The runway blurs, and with a gentle tilt of the yoke, the ground falls away. You're airborne. The sky stretches endlessly, with hills and lakes below. The plane sways lightly, and you feel the controls under your fingertips. For the first time, you feel weightless, truly free. The rush of nervousness begins to fade.

Wright Base Flight Training was built to offer these endless possibilities. Founded by Myron Yoder, Wright Base Flight Training is dedicated to making aviation accessible to everyone with the dream of soaring. With a team of seven knowledgeable instructors, the academy serves as a gateway to the skies, helping people of all ages and backgrounds achieve their flying aspirations. Yoder's love for aviation began in childhood, inspired by his father, a private pilot. On his 16th birthday, his sister gifted him a flight lesson with his father's instructor. By 17, Yoder had soloed, eventually earning a degree in flight science.

He worked as a flight instructor, mechanic, and charter pilot in Indiana before running a boat rental business. His passion for aviation led him back to the skies, where he started teaching at Winchester Airport.

Recognizing a need for structured, accessible flight training, Yoder founded Wright Base Flight Training. His entrepreneurial mind and aviation expertise have turned a promising local operation into a successful flight school.

"Most people who are learning to fly are pretty nervous about coming to the airport. They feel like they're about to commit a crime just by showing up," Yoder explained. "But private aviation is incredibly welcoming, and I wanted to create a place where people could see that."

Learning to fly can feel intimidating. Potential pilots are often discouraged by the fear of the unknown, the complexity of aviation, and the imposing nature of airports. Yoder designed Wright Base Flight Training to address these concerns by offering a welcoming, straightforward experience.

He does this by implementing discovery flights using the training center's Cessna 172 aircraft. These low-pressure, one-hour experiences give beginners a taste of what it's like to be in the pilot's seat.

During the flight, participants receive hands-on experience with the controls while Yoder or another instructor guides them through the process. By the end, many discover that flying isn't as daunting as they imagined.

Whether you're a high schooler chasing a lifelong dream or a retiree ready to embrace a new adventure, Wright Base Flight Training is committed to making flying accessible.

The academy's team of instructors helps every student feel comfortable and confident, breaking down complex requirements and guiding them step by step. This structured, approachable method has attracted many students and helped the academy grow.

"Once people connect with someone in aviation, they usually get comfortable within a few lessons and realize, 'This is something anybody can do," Yoder said.



Chief flight instructor Myron Yoder settles into the cockpit, ready to guide another student through their first experience at the controls.

If you've ever dreamed of flying, now is the time to take the leap. Wright Base Flight Training invites you to book a discovery flight and experience the joy of aviation firsthand. With Yoder and his team by your side, you'll see that flying is for anyone ready to embrace the adventure. **GN** 

Visit https://www.wrightbase.com or call (931) 588–0211 for more information. Address: Tullahoma Regional Airport 807 William Northern Blvd. Tullahoma



▲ Chief Flight Instructor Myron Yoder walks writer Jeriah Brumfield through the basics of aviation.

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## St. Patrick's Day at South Jackson Performing Arts Center

- March 28





Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

South Jackson Performing Arts Center hosted a celebration of Irish music and dance on March 13. The event featured Jim and Inge Wood, national buck dancing champion Angela Wood, and a talented lineup of guest performers. The evening included a free dance workshop, festive food, and a spirited concert honoring Celtic heritage.



1. Jeanna Wing 2. Christy and Rusty Anderson 3. Peggy Burton 4. Emmarie, Gatlin Gibson, Cadence Fults, Joseph Bean, and James Bean 5. Inge Wood





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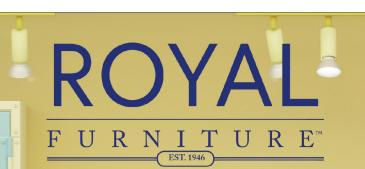


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